

**Minutes of the fifth Local Economic Forum meeting held on Tuesday 11th December 2001 at the Lighthouse Suite, Lerwick Hotel, South Road, Lerwick, Shetland.**

**Members Present:**

David Finch (Shetland Enterprise)  
Lorna Graham (Shetland Knitwear Trades Association)  
Ruth Henderson (Shetland Fish Processors' Association)  
Rob Anderson (Shetland Islands Council)  
Sandy Cluness (Shetland Islands Council)  
Gussie Angus (Shetland Islands Council)  
Gordon Dargie (Shetland College)  
Alec Miller (Shetland Islands Partnership)  
Brian Isbister (Shetland Fishermens' Association)  
Jim Smith (Federation of Small Businesses)

**By Invitation:**

Roy Longmuir (Shetland Enterprise)  
Alvin Bashforth (SIC Development Department)  
Douglas Irvine (SIC Development Department)  
Robin Lingard (Kinnairdie Consulting)  
Kay Smith (SIC Training Section)

Ann Black, Shetland Enterprise (Secretary)  
Steven Guthrie, Shetland Enterprise (Temporary Secretary)

**1. INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair, David Finch, welcomed all present. Apologies were received from Brian Anderson, (Shetland Enterprise), Robert Smith, (Shetland Islands Tourism Board), Gordon Johnson, (North Atlantic Fisheries College), David Sandison, (Shetland Salmon Farmers' Association), Hazel Sutherland, (SIC Chief Executive's Office), Jacqui Watt, (SIC Community Services Department.)

**2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 25TH OCTOBER 2001**

The minutes of the meeting of 25th October 2001 were approved.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**(i) Comments by Scottish Executive on Action Plan**

Scottish Executive's comments on the Shetland LEF Action plan were outlined. It was noted that the Scottish Executive was disappointed that no significant cost savings were to be made in Shetland. However, all actions that the SLEF had been asked to look at were addressed in the plan. Furthermore, as a result of their attendance at the last meeting, the Scottish Executive had learned a great deal about Shetland. In summing up, it was felt that the Shetland Local Economic Forum had a robust plan in place which had "survived the first hurdle," the plan was ready to take forward into actions next year.

One of the first key actions to be addressed was that of streamlining assistance for Business Start-ups.

The Chairman stressed that the action plan's ultimate aim was to ensure greater cohesiveness between agencies. He went on to state that the work of SLEF must complement that of Community Planning Board, and that ultimately there may be a single economic strategy document for Shetland, instead of the various agency business plans.

Concern had been expressed as to the relationship between the SLEF and the SIC's Economic Development Forum, as currently the two were running in isolation. The Chairs of both groups agreed to amalgamate activities by extending membership and holding the SLEF and the Economic Development Forum meetings back to back, for an initial six-month trial period. Members felt that the individual industry advisory panels allowed frank and free exchange of views by industry and should continue to meet. Information from these could then be fed into SLEF and Economic Development Forum meetings.

## **(ii) Communications**

A discussion followed regarding communication. It was agreed that the various local media be made aware of activities, primarily through the website, of the Shetland Local Economic Forum.

As part of the communications strategy, it was agreed that the press would be invited to the Economic Development Forum meetings, as is the case at present.

The Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses also thanked staff from Shetland Enterprise and SIC, Development Department for addressing its Annual General Meeting. He felt that they had been well received by FSB members and the event had raised the profile of the SLEF.

## **(iii) Skills to Industry Programme (SLEF/19)**

Douglas Irvine, SIC Development Department, invited members to comment on the proposal tabled at the last meeting. Members agreed in principal to this programme, which encouraged the diversification of the economic base, and return migration to the isles.

## **Shetland Web Portal - Presentation by Roy Longmuir**

Roy Longmuir, e-business adviser with Shetland Enterprise gave a presentation to the forum on [Web portals](#). A discussion followed and the group responded positively to the suggestion of a Web portal for Shetland.

Shetland Islands Council, Development Department confirmed that the Information and Communication Technology Department had already issued a pre-tender document to gauge interest in running such a site for Shetland, and the results are awaited.

## **AOCB**

There were no items for discussion.

## **Arrangements for Next Meeting**

The Chair brought the meeting to a close by thanking those who attended. The next meeting of the Shetland Local Economic Forum will be held on Tuesday 15th January 2002. The venue and time of meeting will be advised later.